

R E M A R K S


The instant Preliminary Amendment is submitted so as to delete the multiple dependent claims and therefore save on filing costs.

An early action on the merits is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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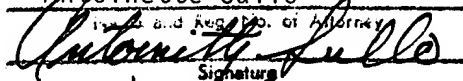
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AMENDED CLAIMS

3. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 1 [or claim 2] characterised in that an air discharge passage (60; 60<sub>a</sub>, 61) goes from the vent opening (62) of the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) to an aperture (40) in an intake housing (34) arranged upstream of the lock space (24) and the air discharge passage can be connected at the aperture to a discharge air line.

4. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 3] claim 1 characterised in that the sealing body (56, 56<sub>a</sub>) is provided with a cone tip (57) for the annular seat (63).

5. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 4] claim 1 characterised in that in the region of its vent opening (62) the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) is connected to an air guide element (60; 60<sub>a</sub>, 61) which is variable in length, as an air discharge passage.

9. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 7 [or claim 8] characterised in that an external bead (76) is provided at the end of the hollow profile member (60<sub>a</sub>) which end is remote from the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>), and is adapted to butt against

an internal collar (78) of the surrounding head profile member (61).

10. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 9] claim 1 characterised in that disposed in opposite relationship to the lower edge (66) of the funnel configuration of the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) are abutment elements (58, 58<sub>a</sub>) provided in the lock space (24).

11. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 3 through 10] claim 3 characterised by a reduced pressure source (41) at the air discharge passage (60; 60<sub>a</sub>, 61), at which an injector (41) is optionally arranged.

12. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 11] claim 1 characterised in that the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) which is movable in the lock space (24) is surrounded by a substantially stationary sealing edge (70, 91) as a counterpart sealing member.

15. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 13 [or claim 14] characterised in that the sealing edge (70, 91) and the blowing device (32) are arranged in the transitional region

between the intake housing (34) and the lock space (24) or a lock housing (22) surrounding the latter.

16. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 14 [or claim 15] characterised in that the blowing device (32) with its air feed (33) forms a separate annular insert between the intake housing (34) and the lock housing (22).

17. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 16] claim 1 characterised in that the lock space (24) is at least partially provided with an air-guidable lining, in particular with a porous cone (80).

18. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 17] claim 1 characterised in that a valve (82) is arranged downstream of the lock space (24) and is switchable alternately with the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) arranged upstream of the lock space in the inward transfer direction (x).

20. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 19] claim 1 characterised in that a conveyor air partial flow introduction means (15, 16) is arranged downstream of the lock space (24) at its outlet.

21. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 20] claim 1 characterised in that the stroke drive for the sealing body (56) comprises a bellows-type cylinder (52).

22. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 21] claim 1 characterised in that the stroke drive for the sealing body (46<sub>a</sub>) comprises a pneumatic cylinder (52<sub>a</sub>) with piston (53), in particular with a plunger piston.

23. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 21 [or claim 22] characterised in that the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>) on the one hand and stationary parts of the stroke drive (52<sub>a</sub>) on the other hand are provided with arrangements (58<sub>a</sub>, 65) for stepwise rotation of the closure body about its longitudinal axis (A) during its stroke movement.

24[,]. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 21 through 23] claim 21 characterised in that the bellows-type cylinder (52) or the pneumatic cylinder (52<sub>a</sub>) is arranged on a carrier plate (50) in the lock space (24).

25. (Amended) A device as set forth in claim 9[, claim 23 or claim 24] characterised in that the abutment elements (58, 58<sub>a</sub>) or the arrangements (65) on the lock space side are fixed to the carrier plate (50) on bar members (48) holding the latter.

26. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 25] claim 1 characterised in that one of the counterpart sealing elements is a flexible sealing surface (90) which is clamped in respect of its cross-section at one end and the other is a sealing edge (91) which entrains the free edge region of the sealing surface and which increasingly deforms it in the path of movement, wherein the sealing surface (90) is preferably a ring surrounding the closure body (64, 64<sub>a</sub>).

29. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 26 through 28] claim 26 characterised in that the thickness (t) of the sealing lip (90) is larger than the spacing (z) of the entrainment portion or portions (92) from the sealing edge (94).

31. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 26 through 30] claim 26 characterised in that the sealing lip (90) is held clampingly at one end between two flanges (80) and/or the sealing lip (90) is inclined downwardly in cross-section at an angle (w) from its clamping location (89).

32. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 9] claim 1 characterised in that the lip edge (91) of the sealing lip (90) in the relaxed position thereof extends substantially parallel to the stroke travel (y) or the longitudinal axis (A) of the device (10).

33. (Amended) A device as set forth in [one of claims 1 through 32] claim 1 characterised in that connected to a compressed air source (96) is a comparator (98) to which there are connected a feed line (100) for the actual conveyor pressure of the lock device (10, 10<sub>a</sub>) and a feed line (100<sub>a</sub>) from a reference value generator (102).

35. (Amended) A method of transferring bulk material from a reservoir or a holding space through a lock space into a pneumatic conveyor conduit by means of the device as set forth in [at least one of the preceding claims] claim 1 characterised in that air displaced from the lock space during the introduction of the bulk material is discharged through at least one vent opening in the closure body which goes into an air discharge passage.